Approved For Release 2005/01/12 : CIA-RDP88-01315R000400400040-3

CIA OPERATIONS CENTER

Date. 2 Nov 77
Item No. 5
Ref. No.

NEWS ANALYSIS SERVICE

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UP-031

(SALT LEAKS)

(BY JIM ANDERSON)

WASHINGTON (UPI) - THE STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TREATY NOW BEING NEGOTIATED WITH THE SOVIET UNION IS BEING DESCRIBED BY STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS AS THE MOST THOROUGHLY LEAKED DOCUMENT IN RECENT DIPLOMATIC HISTORY.

THE OFFICIALS SAID THE LEAKS CLEARLY COME FROM THE CAPITOL HILL AND PENTAGON OPPONENTS OF THE TREATY WHO HAVE BEEN BRIEFED BY SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE OR OTHER OFFICIALS.

THE NEWS LEAKS, THEY SAY, ARE DOUBLY WORRYING: NOT ONLY ARE THEY A BREACH OF SECURITY BUT THEY ARE A SURE SIGN OF ACTIVE AND DETERMINED OPPOSITION TO THE STILL UNCONCLUDED ARMS LIMITATIONS.

ONE OFFICIAL SAID THE LEAKS, WHICH HAVE LAID OUT THE THREE-TIER SALT II NEGOTIATIONS IN GREAT DETAIL, HAVE THEMSELVES BECOME AN ELEMENT IN THE BARGAINING.

"IT'S NOT ALTOGETHER A NEGATIVE THING," HE SAID, "BECAUSE IT CAN STRENGTHEN OUR NEGOTIATORS' HAND. WHEN A FIGURE IS AGREED, IT QUICKLY LEAKS TO THE PUBLIC AND THEN THE AMERICAN NEGOTIATOR CAN SAY TO THE RUSSIANS, 'WELL, IT'S PUBLIC NOW, SO WE HAVE TO STICK WITH THAT NUMBER.'"

THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE BEING CONDUCTED IN GENEVA, WITH THE UNITED STATES BEING REPRESENTED BY PAUL WARNKE, HEAD OF THE ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY. STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS DO NOT BELIEVE THE LEAKS COME FROM GENEVA.

WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS HAVE HELD PRIVATE "BACKGROUND SESSIONS" FOR SELECTED REPORTERS, BUT NO ACTUAL NUMBERS HAVE BEEN DIVULGED THERE.

STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS SAID THE GREATEST CONCERN CAME AFTER A NEW YORK TIMES STORY IN OCTOBER, WHICH LAID OUT THE SALT II NEGOTIATING POSITIONS IN GREAT DETAIL. AN ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL SAID, "WE ARE NOW AT A POINT WHERE YOU CAN'T KEEP ANYTHING SECRET, EVEN THE MOST SENSITIVE MATERIAL."

DESPITE THE CONCERN, NO OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION WAS LAUNCHED AND, THE OFFICIAL SAID, THERE WAS A GENERAL RECOGNITION WITHIN THE STATE DEPARTMENT THAT EVEN THE MOST SECRET NEGOTIATIONS WILL SOON BECOME PUBLIC.

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WHATEVER GAPS REMAINED AFTER THE TIMES STORY WERE QUICKLY FILLED IN BY OTHER DETAILED LEAKS WHICH ON OCT. 20 REACHED THE STAGE OF BEING PUT IN THE FORM OF A PRESS RELEASE BY THE AMERICAN SECURITY COUNCIL, A CONSERVATIVE-ORIENTED THINK TANK, WHICH PUBLISHED A PAPER ON SALT II BY REP. ROBIN BEARD, R-TENN., A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE.

THAT COMMITTEE HAD BEEN GIVEN CLASSIFIED BRIEFINGS ON THE NEGOTIATIONS.

BEARD'S PAPER, CRITICAL OF THE U.S. NEGOTIATORS, LISTED IN GREAT DETAIL THE PROVISIONS WHICH HAD BEEN NEGOTIATED. NO SOURCE WAS GIVEN.

ANOTHER PAPER, PUBLISHED YESTERDAY BY PAUL NITZE, A MEMBER OF THE SALT I NEGOTIATING TEAM IN 1970-72, WAS EVEN MORE UP TO DATE AND SPECIFIC ON THE TOTALS NEGOTIATED SO FAR, GIVING DETAILS THAT HAD ONLY BEEN AGREED LAST WEEK. AGAIN, NO ATTRIBUTION WAS GIVEN FOR THE INFORMATION.

A STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL SAID SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE IS AWARE THE LEAKS MAY HAVE COME FROM CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES, BUT HE CONSIDERS IT VITAL TO KEEP THE MEMBERS INFORMED.

"HE WILL CONTINUE TO BRIEF THE COMMITTEES IN THE SURE KNOWLEDGE THAT IT WILL BECOME PUBLIC. THERE'S NO QUESTION IN ANYBODY'S MIND NOW. IT WILL LEAK," AN OFFICIAL SAID.

UPI 11-02 10:05 RES

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